

PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE RALEIGH NC
0800 AM EDT MON JUN 23 2014

The National Weather Service has declared the week of June 22nd through 28th, LIGHTNING SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK. This is the first in a series of five public information statements to be issued by the National Weather Service office in Raleigh, NC containing information on lightning and lightning safety.

LIGHTNING AND LIGHTNING SAFETY - AN INTRODUCTION

In the United States, there are between 20 and 25 million Cloud-to-ground lightning flashes each year. While lightning can be fascinating to watch, it is also extremely dangerous. Each one of those 25 million flashes is a potential killer. Based on data for the last 30 years (1984 to 2013), lightning has killed more than 1500 people in the United States, an average of 51 people per year based on documented cases. In addition, during this same period, lightning has injured an estimated 15,000 people, some left with life-long neurological damage.

In addition to the deaths and injuries, lightning causes considerable damage across the nation. Each year, lightning is the cause of about 25,000 fires, including about 4400 house fires, 1800 other structural fires, and numerous forest fires. Those fires are responsible for an additional estimated 12 deaths per year. All totaled, lightning causes nearly \$1 billion in damages each year.

During the next several days, we'll provide additional information on lightning and lightning safety. We'll cover what you can do to protect yourself from this dangerous killer. Most importantly, we want you to remember that there is no safe place outside during a thunderstorm. When thunder roars, go indoors!

Lightning fact for today:

The best protection from lightning is a substantial building. If you can't get inside a substantial building, a hard-topped metal vehicle will protect you from lightning. If the vehicle is struck, the lightning will follow the outer metal shell of the vehicle to the ground. It's important to make sure that you're fully inside the vehicle with the windows rolled up. Note that the rubber tires do not prevent the vehicle from being struck, nor do they provide any protection.

Here's a list of topics we'll cover later this week:

TUESDAY - Lightning's Most Deadly Activities

WEDNESDAY - Lightning Safety and Sports Activities

THURSDAY - Lightning Safety at Work

FRIDAY - Lightning Safety Around the Home

For additional information about lightning or lightning safety, visit NOAA's Lightning Safety Awareness web site at:

<http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov>

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Raleigh, NC